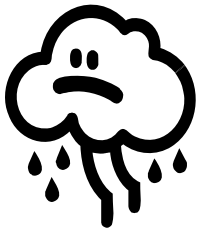


Department of Human Services

Articles in Today's Clips Tuesday, December 5, 2006

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Prepared by the
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Published December 5, 2006
[From Lansing State Journal]

Local news briefs

Group: Funding for children down

As the state's economy remains in the doldrums, funding for services to help children and families continues to suffer, according to new report by a nonprofit advocacy group for children.

A Michigan's Children analysis from fiscal year 2001 through the fiscal year 2007 budget shows funding for many children and families services has been cut or eliminated or hasn't kept pace with inflation, rising costs and rising need.

"Too many children in Michigan are hurting, and their pain is deepening as fewer services are available to help them and the revenue base to support those services continues to erode," President Sharon Claytor Peters said in a news release. The full report is available at www.michigans children.org. Some findings:

- Funding for most major child abuse and neglect prevention programs has been cut as much as 15 percent despite a 5 percent increase in the number of child abuse and neglect victims.
- One in five Michigan children under the age of 5 lives in poverty.

December 5, 2006

REPORT FAULTS CHILD WELFARE SPENDING

Spending on child welfare programs has increased in the last couple of years, but they are still behind where they were 10 years ago, according to a report released Monday by Michigan's Children.

The report from the child advocacy group said spending on financial assistance programs for families has grown, but that most of that growth has been a reflection of increasing caseloads, not aid to individual families. And spending on prevention programs in many cases has been cut or held steady despite increases in need.

The group noted, for instance, that Family Independence Program funding is up only 10 percent in fiscal year 2006-07 over FY 2000-01. But caseloads over that period are up 14 percent. The report noted that, for most families, grants have not increased since 1993 and per-child clothing allowances have been cut to \$47.50 per child from \$75. Those allowances have also been restricted to school-aged children.

The goal of welfare reform was to move recipients into work, but the report said childcare assistance for those low-income working families has been more difficult to obtain. Eligibility for the subsidies was cut in 2003 to 150 percent of poverty from 185 percent and in 2004 the number of hours available was cut to 100 every two weeks from 140 hours.

That has meant an overall funding drop to \$462 million for the current fiscal year from \$499.2 million in FY 2002-03, the peak of childcare assistance funding. And reimbursements to providers have remained steady, representing about 75 percent of the 1996 market rate.

Staff to monitor childcare facility licensing has also been cut to 63 from a prior high of 90.

But the report noted the Enhance Quality Improvement Program, which provides grants to providers for enhancing the quality of their program and adding spots for infants and special needs children, was restored for the current fiscal year after being cut last year.

Medicaid spending has increased since 2001, with payments to hospitals up 58 percent to \$1.1 billion, physician payments up 81 percent to \$276.5 million and payments to HMOs up 86 percent to \$2.5 billion. But that provides coverage for 40 percent of all births, half of all infants and toddlers and as much as a quarter of all school-aged children.

Funds for maternal and child health services have been cut to \$7.3 million in the current budget from \$9 million in 2000-01 and the MICHild program, which provides coverage for low-income children not qualifying for Medicaid, has been cut to \$46.6 million from \$57.6 million in 2000-01 while the monthly premium was doubled to \$10 per family.

The budget for the Michigan Model health curriculum was cut in 2003-04 to \$500,000 from \$3.6 million the prior year, and funding has not been restored since.

Meanwhile, the report said, prevention programs have been cut. Child abuse and neglect prevention funds are up to \$67.1 million for the current fiscal year from \$66.1 million last year, but that is still down from the \$78 million spent in FY 2000-01. And the report noted that reports of child abuse and neglect have grown 5 percent and foster care placements have grown 28 percent during the period.

The state has provided funding for 51 additional child protective services workers and five additional licensing consultants, but has not restored funding for the nine child advocacy centers eliminated by executive order in 2002.

The All Students Achieve-Parent Involvement and Education Program (ASAP-PIE), which allowed for home visits and other family support programs, was eliminated in FY 2003-04. And full-day preschool program funding was eliminated in FY 2001-02, the report said.

Current preschool program funding has been increased to \$78.6 million from \$72.6 million last year, but that is still expected to be as much as \$15 million short of the need for at-risk preschool students.

The current budget does include \$5 million for the Great Parents/Great Start program through intermediate school districts, up from \$3.3 million last year, as well as \$1 million in grants for community Great Start Collaboratives to improve early childhood programs.

And the group did praise the \$4.2 million under the FIP funding for marriage and fatherhood initiatives.

Officials with the Department of Human Services had not had a chance to review the report for comment.

Study: State Cuts Hurting Kids

MIRS, Monday, December 4, 2006

Michigan's Children recently conducted a study that shows state budget cuts are hurting the kids.

The group analyzed state spending from Fiscal Year (FY) 2001 to the FY 2007 budget and found that that funding for many children and families services has been cut or eliminated, or hasn't kept pace with inflation, rising costs and rising need.

"Too many children in Michigan are hurting, and their pain is deepening as fewer services are available to help them and the revenue base to support those services continues to erode," said Michigan's Children President Sharon Claytor **PETERS**.

A few highlights from the report:

Funding for most major child abuse and neglect prevention programs has been cut as much as 15 percent despite a 5 percent increase in the number of child abuse and neglect victims.

While the percentage of children living in poverty has jumped 31 percent, monthly welfare grants to most families have remained unchanged since 1993, dropping their purchasing power by over one third.

Lawmakers for the first time since 2000, increased funding in the 2007 budget for early education. Still, overall funding has dropped 34 percent since 2001.

As more parents take on second and third jobs to help make ends meet, they're getting less help with childcare. Eligibility dropped from 185 percent of poverty to 150 percent, and the number of childcare hours eligible for subsidies dropped from 140 to 100 in a two-week period.

Medicaid spending is up 58 percent to hospitals and 81 percent to physicians, but funding for services that could prevent many childhood ailments and deaths has been slashed, including vision and hearing screenings, school health curriculum, and prenatal care

"We all know that children are our future and we must provide them with the best start possible," Peters said. "As Michigan lawmakers prepare for holiday festivities, we ask them to remember the impact their decisions have on these little lives and to come back next year ready to do whatever it takes to help them."

THE DAILY Reporter

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Mother testifies in abuse trial

[Print Page](#)

By Don Reid-Staff Writer

COLDWATER — The mother of a 2-year-old girl and 4-year-old boy, Jolianne Conley testified Monday her children twice came back from visitation with their father and stepmother with similar medical problems before both were rushed to the hospital June 6, 2003, near death from dehydration.

The trial of stepmother Brandalyn Wertz-Hale, 24, charged with two counts of first degree child abuse, a 15-year felony, and two counts of second degree child abuse, a four-year felony, began after a jury was selected Monday morning.

Branch County Prosecutor Kirk Kashian said he would show Wertz-Hale "intentionally deprived" the two children of water during a week-long visitation to start the summer of 2003.

In a trial expected to feature several medical experts, Kashian told the jurors "this is non-accidental, intentional and cruel. You don't have to be an expert to figure this out."

Defense attorney Rhonda Ives said she will present "the rest of the story." Wertz-Hale was a stay-at-home mom who had a sick 2-year-old daughter. Ives said flu effected the four children the week of visitation and her client "had no plan, no intent to harm them. She loved these children and didn't want this to happen. It was just the perfect storm when all the facts came together" to cause the illness.

Emergency room Dr. Richard Doud saw the nearly 3-year-old girl late in the day when her mother brought her in June 6. The doctor ordered tests on the child, who was reported as thin, with sunken eyes and trembling hands and body, which showed her sodium, chloride, and other test levels as high. The blood tests indicated the child was not malnourished but was dehydrated, a condition called hypernatraemia.

Nurses and others testified the girl asked for water from everyone and anyone.

An aunt who worked at Community Health Center of Branch County tried to get the girl to give a urine sample only to see her attempt to scoop water from the toilet to drink.

Doud called in pediatrician Dr. Edelwina Dy. She warned staff members not to give the child fluids to prevent brain damage and transferred the girl to pediatric intensive care at Bronson Medical Center in Kalamazoo.

Conley said father Jonathan Hale had returned their daughter outside a hair salon but told her the 4-year old boy was being punished and would not be returned.

Conley said she saw her daughter "20 feet away I knew something was wrong." The child's hair had been cut to about an inch "her cheeks and eyes were sunken and drawn. Her voice was weak." Conley stopped only a few minutes to pick up her husband at work before going to the emergency room.

Concerned about her son, Conley and her grandfather went to the Michigan State Police post where a trooper accompanied them to the Berry Street home in Quincy to talk to Hale. No one answered the door. The trooper treated the request as a child custody dispute until he received a call from Doud and a child protective services worker who said the boy also

could be in danger. He was later found and transferred also to Kalamazoo suffering from dehydration.

Conley admitted there were contentions between her, her ex-husband, Hale, and Wertz-Hale over parenting. Conley even withheld visitation for a month until there was joint counseling.

Even though counseling was not successful, Conley said she allowed the kids to go back to the Berry Street home. Conley said of Wertz-Hale "We didn't work through anything. It was her rules, her house."

Conley said she worked hard to try to get the families to work together and "only voiced objections when there were dangers to the children."

On cross examination, Conley said the children came back from spring break and Christmas visits thirsty and ill. The girl was taken to the emergency room after one of the visits — Conley wasn't sure which — but a former doctor told them there was no test for dehydration.

Ives asked why Conley had not mentioned it at any of the many other court hearings. Conley replied "no one had asked."

Conley said in the spring Wertz-Hale said she caught the son drinking from a toilet and had locked the bathroom door.

Conley said Wertz-Hale wanted the boy back in "pull-ups after he was potty trained."

Conley admitted she never was in the house which Ives said had two bathrooms; one without a door and a kitchen sink with stool the kids could use.

Both Conley and Hale began dating their current spouses during a separation before their divorces. Conley admitted there were issues between the couples.

The trial is expected to continue through Thursday.

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Father charged with abuse as baby girl clings to life

Officials: 11-month-old's symptoms are consistent with shaken baby syndrome

Of The Oakland Press

SOUTH LYON - A South Lyon father is facing criminal charges as his baby daughter clings to life with severe head injuries. The Oakland County Prosecutor's Office issued a warrant charging Steven Lindsey McBurney, 31, with one count of first-degree child abuse.

McBurney called 9-1-1 Thursday, saying his 11-month-old daughter was unresponsive and having seizures, Chief Deputy Prosecutor Deborah Carley said.

Emergency workers found the child's breathing labored. McBurney reportedly said the girl was sick and vomited before becoming unresponsive.

She was taken to the hospital at the University of Michigan. Carley said doctors found two subdural hematomas - bruising and bleeding on the brain. One injury was old and one new. Doctors performed surgery to alleviate the pressure on her brain.

They also discovered retinal hemorrhaging.

"Both of these injuries are consistent with shaken baby syndrome and non-accidental trauma," Carley said. "The doctors (said) the injuries could not be caused by seizures or from a fall from furniture."

The girl is still on a respirator in the hospital and showing no signs of brain function, Carley said. She is not expected to survive.

The girl's mother, a nurse, had gone to work, leaving the girl in her father's care, Carley said.

McBurney has a 1998 conviction for second-degree child abuse in Wayne County. The child in that case was 4 1/2 months old and suffered a skull fracture.

First-degree child abuse is a 15-year felony.

McBurney was expected to be arraigned late Monday in 52-1 District Court in Novi. Click here to return to story:

http://www.theoaklandpress.com/stories/120506/loc_2006120530.shtml

WZZM13 ONLINE - ABC TELEVISION for ALL OF WEST MICHIGAN

Baby with blood-alcohol level of 0.364, in good condition

AP

Created: 12/5/2006 7:14:13 AM
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COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP) - Police in Colorado say a baby girl is in good condition after being hospitalized with a blood-alcohol level more than four times the legal limit for an adult driver.

Police say the two-month-old was taken to the hospital early yesterday with a blood-alcohol level of point-three-six-four percent. She was being treated in the intensive care unit.

Authorities are still trying to figure out how the girl ingested the alcohol. Police say the incident is being investigated as child abuse.

Authorities say they believe the mother's boyfriend dropped the woman and child at the hospital and left. They say the mother has given conflicting stories and the whereabouts of the boyfriend are unknown.

Web Editor: [Chris Zoladz](#), Associate Producer

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Article published Dec 5, 2006

EDITORIAL

Planning long-term care can ease future burdens

Michigan residents between the ages of 45 and 65 soon will receive a letter from Gov. Jennifer Granholm urging them to look into their futures. But instead of trying to predict what might lie ahead, the governor wants us to *plan* for the approaching years.

It's part of a federal-state initiative called "Own Your Future" Long-Term Care Awareness Campaign. It has an important message for anyone wanting to avoid financial devastation when unexpected long-term medical needs arise during the so-called "golden years."

Michigan is one of six states being targeted during the third phase of the campaign. Residents will receive letters from their governors encouraging them to order a free "Long-Term Care Planning Tool Kit" which was created by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The kits are available either by returning a postage-paid reply card that will be enclosed with the governor's letter; by calling 1-866-752-6582, or logging on to www.aoa.gov/ownyourfuture.

While media reports have emphasized that the campaign encourages people to plan for their long-term care needs in order to help ease the future financial burden on federal and state resources, such planning also can help alleviate a family's financial devastation when the need for long-term care arises. After all, an individual usually does not qualify for help from a government program such as Medicaid until his or her own resources are depleted.

So it is in our own best interests to look into long-term services available in Michigan and decide how we can best be prepared if we or a loved one ever needs such care. We might want to consider obtaining insurance to help cover long-term care, and the cost of such coverage often is more reasonable when purchased at a younger age.

The cost of long-term care provided at home can climb into the tens of thousands of dollars per year. Provided in a skilled nursing facility, such care can cost \$60,000 or more annually. Trying to pay for such care is beyond the means of many middle-class families.

Long-term care is not exclusive to old age, either. A catastrophic accident, debilitating stroke or other severe health problem can happen at any age and require medical care for years to come.

That is why it is important to plan for the possibility of such an event, and know what options are available to you and your family.

"More long-term care planning means more people will have the ability to choose the long-term care service, supports and financial options that are best for them," according to Mark B. McClellan, M.D., Ph.D., administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

So when you get your letter from Gov. Granholm, don't toss it aside with the junk mail. Read it - and heed it.

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December 5, 2006

Nursing home may privatize

County board to vote on 3-year, \$500K deal to let Ciena company operate money-losing care facility.

Maureen Feighan / The Detroit News

PONTIAC -- Oakland County is moving forward with plans to privatize its cash-strapped 120-bed nursing home despite some commissioners' concerns that the plan is being rushed.

The county commission's general government committee, split down party lines, gave its OK Monday to a contract with Southfield-based Ciena Healthcare Management Inc. to run Golden Oaks Medical Care Facility for \$500,000 a year for the next three years.

As part of the deal, Ciena has also pledged to build a new nursing home in the Pontiac area with at least 120 Medicaid/Medicare certified beds -- to make up for those lost once Golden Oaks closes -- and offer residents the opportunity to transfer there.

"We think this is a reasonable alternative that's good for the taxpayers and good for the patients," said Deputy County Executive Gerald Poisson.

Since 2002, Golden Oaks, now home to about 88 residents, has been losing money, county officials say. Several reasons are to blame: increased competition from the private sector, reduced Medicaid/Medicare reimbursements and regulatory penalties from the state that barred it from accepting any new residents during a one-month period this year. The facility incurred a \$1.9 million deficit in 2006.

But several commissioners questioned what the rush was Monday, especially after the commission had voted in September to include a \$2.7 million subsidy in this year's budget to keep Golden Oaks open. A new county board with a much smaller 13-12 GOP majority starts in January.

"I think something of this much importance shouldn't be rushed through," said Commissioner Tim Melton, D-Auburn Hills.

But Poisson said the county is spending \$200,000 a month to keep Golden Oaks open. He said it would also cost between \$4.9 million and \$16.9 million to renovate the 1977 building.

Still, Toni Wilson, Oakland County's ombudsman with the advocacy group Citizens for Better Care, said her agency hates to see county medical care facilities disappear because they're often the last resort for low-income residents who need long-term care and are difficult to place.

"Now where will those people go?" she said.

The full county board will vote on the proposal Dec. 14.

You can reach Maureen Feighan at (248) 647-7416 or mfeighan@detnews.com.

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Health plan unfair to insured

FLINT JOURNAL LETTER TO THE EDITOR

FLINT TOWNSHIP

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Tuesday, December 05, 2006

By Sue Thrall

JOURNAL READER

County voters decided that property owners should pay for a health plan for uninsured residents. What a deal!

I have insurance that I work very hard to pay for, and it comes with a \$1,250 deductible.

If I get sick, I either pay full price for care, or I go without. I don't see a doctor every time I'm sick or fill my prescriptions because I can't always pay for the office call or medicine.

I have to meet the \$1,250 first. I don't have eye or dental plans, either.

Do you think the taxpayers want to pay for that next?

But the voters in Genesee County tell me I should pay for the uninsured. They should pay their own doctor bills or do without like everyone else.

Does Genesee County have more uninsured people than Wayne, Macomb, Oakland or Livingston counties, or are the property owners here just a lot richer or dumber?

Or maybe we have a lot of uninsured non-property owners voting on things that they don't have to pay for.

Whatever the answer is, I have a decision or two to make since the voters have decided how to spend my money - for charitable causes that I don't approve of. I must now decide whether to continue to live here or not. I'm third generation, but maybe it's time to go.

If I decide to stay here, then any local contribution that I used to make - such as to the Whaley Children's Center, YWCA, United Way, Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts - must cease immediately, and I hope that other property owners will do the same. I cannot afford to do both.

When the decision of whom and what we want to support with our money is decided by voters who don't pay property taxes, it's time to stop giving altogether. They'll want more and more.

How is this money going to be administered? If it's the same way all the other Genesee County programs are handled, we can look forward to a lot of mismanaged money.

It's too bad we can't rescind this bad idea. It's going to breed resentment of the people who use this program by the people who have to pay for it and make people think more about leaving Genesee County than ever before.

There are insurance plans for as little as \$50 per month, according to a recent Blue Cross Blue Shield ad in The Flint Journal.

Maybe the uninsured should look at these plans instead of expecting another free handout. If I'm going to

pay for something, let it be something that benefits the whole community - including myself - such as police or fire services.

As taxpayers, we already pay for Medicaid, etc. Why should we pay more?

Sue Thrall

Flint Township

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Group embarks on ending homelessness

Homelessness hard to define in tri-county area

By DAN SCHNEIDER, DMG Writer

HOUGHTON — A coalition of human service agencies in Baraga, Houghton and Keweenaw counties have set a goal to end homelessness in the three counties within 10 years.

Homelessness is an often-overlooked problem in the Copper Country. Here, the homeless population doesn't fit society's standard definitions, said Dave Mayo-Kiely, director of the Copper Country Human Services Coordinating Body.

"You don't drive around the Keweenaw and see people standing on the street homeless," he said.

The climate of the Copper Country makes the stereotypical homeless lifestyle, living outdoors in improvised shelter, impossible. But there is a population in the Keweenaw that doesn't have proper housing, people who are living with relatives or friends. They are the people who fit the definition of homelessness generated by the Baraga/Houghton/Keweenaw Continuum of Care. That's the group working toward the 10-year elimination of homelessness.

"It's something that we need to educate the public on," said Char Kangas, BHK Continuum of Care coordinator. "We just want to make people aware of the plight of a homeless person, so often ... people will say well, this person isn't homeless, or we don't have people living on the streets up here."

In March, the continuum began working on its 10-year plan. Representatives presented the completed plan to the Michigan State Housing Development Authority at an Oct. 17 event in Lansing. The event kicked off a statewide, county by county effort to end homelessness within a decade.

In its plan, the BHK Continuum of Care defines homelessness as follows: "Individuals and families who lack of a permanent, affordable, safe and suitable address."

"You can have a roof over your head and be living in a little corner of someone else's house, that's not a home," Kangas said. "That doesn't do anything for your self respect. It's demoralizing, it's dehumanizing, it's just not the way it's supposed to be."

But with help, those people can make progress toward self sufficiency. A 19-year old woman, who wanted to remain anonymous, came to Houghton from Milwaukee to live with a friend's mom. She had nowhere to go in Milwaukee and no place of her own to live when she arrived here.



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She got an apartment and life skills counseling through the Supportive Housing for Youth Program (SHYP). Now she has a job, is working on her GED, has received certification as a nursing assistant, and has bigger plans for the future.

"I plan to graduate high school this year and then go to a community college and get my RNA," she said.

SHYP rents apartments in Houghton and Hancock and provides them, for up to 18 months, to homeless youth ages 16 to 20. The program also helps keep the youth on track in school and in other aspects of their lives.

Shanna Cherubini manages the program. She is the western U.P. services supervisor for Child and Family Services.

"It's a stepping stone," she said. "They're not living with their parents and they're not completely left to fend for themselves," she said.

The program has had 97 referrals since 2004.

Mayo-Kiely said providing a stock of similar supportive housing for adults is one of the major goals of the 10-year plan.

"Supportive housing is kind of a model where you get people into a house ... and you bring services to a client," Mayo-Kiely said. "Michigan Works!, for instance, could come and help them work on job skills."

Mayo-Kiely said if families do not have housing, it makes it difficult to meet their other needs such as food and clothing.

Another major goal of the 10-year plan is to keep people who do have housing in their houses.

"We do have a lot of people who are at risk of being homeless," Mayo-Kiely said. "Prevention is a big part of what we have to do."

Kangas agreed.

"One of the most important things in preventing homelessness, especially in our area, is keeping people in their homes, preventing them from losing their homes," she said.

To accomplish that, the continuum wants to centralize access to available help agencies in the three counties. Agencies and groups like the Michigan Department of Human Services, the Salvation Army and others offer assistance for things like paying utility bills. And many other agencies offer other types of help.

"For a lot of people, if you've got to go four or five different places to get the help you're eligible for, it becomes difficult," Mayo-Kiely said.

A telephone information system (211) is available in the U.P. to give people information on available services. But one of the goals of the 10-year plan is to create a physical location in the area where people can come to get connected with help they need.

"Other counties have been able to try this one-stop shop and it's been successful," Mayo-Kiely said.

It will require cooperation among the agencies.

"Agencies have to give some stuff up to make this happen, they have to give up some control," he said.

Another important need is transitional shelter for people.

"There is no temporary, emergency housing," Mayo-Kiely said.

There are shelters in Baraga and Calumet to serve domestic violence victims, a population the continuum considers to be homeless. But there are no emergency shelters for the general homeless population.

While the BHK Continuum of Care works to improve that situation and others through its 10-year plan, Kangas said people should continue to support local human service organizations.

"That is always going to be very important," Kangas said.

Those organizations include the Barbara Carole Gundlach Shelter Home in Calumet, Baraga County Shelter Home in L'Anse, St. Vincent DePaul, Community Action and the Salvation Army.

Cherubini said the Supportive Housing for Youth Program currently has a need for donations to supply Christmas gifts for the program's clients. Donations can be made through Child and Family Services of the Upper Peninsula.

Dan Schneider can be reached at dschneider@mininggazette.com

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TUESDAY DECEMBER 5, 2006 Last modified: *Monday, December 4, 2006 5:05 PM EST*

Reaching out to homeless youth

Counselors with Do'Chas II Counseling in Jackson help local 'unaccompanied youth' stay in school and find housing.

By [David Panian](#)

Daily Telegram Staff Writer

ADRIAN — For the past year, three counselors have been logging thousands of miles as they crisscross Lenawee County helping homeless children stay in school and find housing.

Sadie Carrico, Roseann Miller and Linda Schwalm work for Do'Chas II Counseling in Jackson — the original Do'Chas was a for-profit agency; the current incarnation is nonprofit and added "II" to its name to differentiate itself from the original — but spend much of their time in Lenawee County as well as some parts of Hillsdale, Jackson and Monroe counties. They work out of their cars as they visit their clients, who are generally 19 or younger. Schwalm said they are working with 40 students in Lenawee County now and closed 10 other cases when the students were in "safe, appropriate living conditions."

Do'Chas, which means "hope" in Welsh, received the contract from the state of Michigan about a year ago to provide counseling services to what are technically called "unaccompanied youth." These children may be runaways, have been kicked out of their homes or been abandoned by their parents, Schwalm said. They end up sleeping outside or in a car or doubling up with friends.

"According to national statistics, the number one reason (for children becoming homeless) is problems with family rules," Schwalm said. "Second is fleeing from abuse — substance abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, substance abuse by the runaway."

Abandonment is when parents or guardians move away and the child cannot go with them.

"When people hear that, they're puzzled because they don't understand how that can happen," Schwalm said.

Carrico, a clinical supervisor for Do'Chas, said the law allows parents to evict children once they are 17. Schwalm said 17-year-olds also are able to legally rent an apartment.

"Even though they have the right to rent, we know of no landlords that will rent to them even if they have the resources," Schwalm said.

However, many teenagers lack the life skills, finances and education to successfully live on their own. That is where the Do'Chas counselors come in, helping them learn what resources are available and keeping them in school.

The service is free, and the students or their families — Do'Chas also works with children who are considered at-



HELPING THE HOMELESS: From left, Roseann Miller, Sadie Carrico and Linda Schwalm, who work for Do'Chas II Counseling in Jackson, provide counseling services to "unaccompanied youth." The women are working with 40 students in Lenawee County. — Telegram photo by Mike Calamungi

risk of being homeless — are usually referred to Do'Chas through their school counselor or homeless education liaison. Do'Chas' services are free.

Carrico said that anyone can make a referral to Do'Chas, but that they prefer referrals to go through the students' schools.

When they first meet with a new client, they ask where the student is living, what the living conditions are, what they are doing for clothing and school supplies, and what their transportation options are. Schwalm said the transportation issue is the most important because that helps them determine how the students will get to school. By law, school districts must provide transportation to homeless students so that they can stay in their home district.

Homeless students also qualify for free breakfasts and lunches at school.

A case is closed after 12 counseling sessions or when the child's living situation has stabilized, which essentially means the child is able to live independently.

"Some of them don't stay stable, they do return to us," Schwalm said. "That's not the norm."

Most end up with a family or in a long-term shelter. There are no long-term shelters in Lenawee County.

The counselors' goal is to keep the students in school and to, if possible, reunify families.

The counselors do have good success keeping the kids they work with in school. For example, Schwalm said only one of the 40 students she worked with in the first six months since Do'Chas started serving kids in Lenawee and surrounding counties did not complete high school. The 39 other students have gone on to college, apprenticeships or skilled trades training.

As for reunifying families, that generally doesn't happen.

"The majority end up in homes with stable adults who have their own teenagers," Schwalm said.

When they can, the counselors will meet with the students' parents, but, they say, some of the kids don't want to stay with adults — they don't like the rules that are set for them — or have their parents involved because they are possessive of the counseling. Carrico said some parents don't want to be involved.

They also help the students address problems with anger management, coping and self-esteem and help with information on food pantries and how to apply for Medicaid.

"We don't work just during the school year," Schwalm said, adding that Do'Chas has summer counseling and prevention programs. Miller, a family specialist, said the summer programs are in collaboration with the Boys & Girls Club of Lenawee.

Cooperation like that from other social service agencies in the county has been helpful as the counselors work to help the unaccompanied youth.

"We've been well-received, and (the Michigan Department of Human Services) has given us a lot of support," Schwalm said. "Even though we're new to Lenawee County ... it's a pleasure to serve a community that has caring, cooperative resources."

The Michigan Department of Human Services maintains toll-free hotlines for runaways and parents. The youth runaway hotline is (800) 292-4517. The parent help hotline is (800) 942-4357. DHS will put callers in touch with counselors such as those from Do'Chas.

-- CLOSE WINDOW--

December 5, 2006

For 1,000 or More Homeless in Hawaii, Beaches Are the Best Option

By JANIS L. MAGIN

HONOLULU, Dec. 4 — When the home she had rented for 30 years for \$300 a month was sold, Alice Greenwood and her 6-year-old son joined an estimated 1,000 people living in tents along the 13 miles of beaches on the Waianae Coast of Oahu.

“There was no choice but to come on the beach,” said Ms. Greenwood, 60, who is disabled because of a work-related injury eight years ago and lost her benefits a month before losing her home.

Homelessness in [Hawaii](#) has become so pervasive that the governor has assigned a state employee to work full time at getting people off the beaches and into transitional housing. Once there, they have access to rent assistance programs and low-income housing.

While hundreds of homeless people live on Honolulu’s beaches, including the tourist center Waikiki, it is the Waianae Coast on the semiarid west shore where the problem is most visible. The population of Waianae, home to about 40,000 of Oahu’s 900,000 people, is predominantly native Hawaiian and is historically low income.

Hawaii’s economy has been strong in the last two years, and the state consistently has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation. The real estate market has skyrocketed along with the job growth, and houses on the Waianae Coast that rented for \$200 or \$300 a month a couple of years ago are now advertised for more than \$1,000.

Nobody knows exactly how many people are living on the beach. Kaulana Park, the state’s point man for the homeless, estimated that more than 1,000 people lived on the Waianae Coast beaches, but he cautioned that any count was good only on the day it was taken. And that estimate does not account for the hidden homeless: people who sleep on a relative’s sofa, or in their cars, or camp in areas not as visible as the public beaches.

Many living on the beach have jobs, mostly in the service and construction sectors. They include families with children, who attend public schools by day and sleep in tents on the beach at night.

Venise Lewis, 35, who lives near Ms. Greenwood at Maili Beach Park with her husband and two of their four children, said her daughters, ages 8 and 10, must finish their homework in the afternoon because there was no lighting at the beach after sunset.

Ms. Lewis’s oldest daughter lives with a grandmother, and her son lives with the family’s pastor.

“They don’t like the idea of living on the beach,” she said of her younger children. “Usually when we go camping, we go home if it rains.”

The homeless problem in Hawaii came to light in March, when the City and County of Honolulu began a cleanup of Ala Moana Beach Park, at the entrance to Waikiki, and began closing the park at night in response to complaints.

Hundreds of homeless people, or “illegal campers,” as the city calls them, moved to an emergency transitional shelter set up by the state in a warehouse close to downtown Honolulu. But some went west, closer to the Waianae Coast communities where they were raised. The city has since conducted similar cleanups at other beaches.

Lester Chang, the city’s parks and recreation director, said the number of illegal campers made it difficult for his department to keep the parks safe and clean.

“I think all communities have to deal with this situation, but Hawaii is unique because it’s an island,” Mr. Chang said. “There’s no place to push them off to.”

Honolulu officials say finding long-term solutions to the homeless problem on Oahu is the state’s responsibility. The city’s housing department was abolished in the late 1990s after a scandal.

Mr. Park has been talking with New York City officials about how to adapt New York’s solutions to an island state.

He said he was inspired by a speech last summer by Mayor [Michael R. Bloomberg](#) of New York, who told of how the city had secured financing for some 12,000 units of supportive housing, and of the city’s program to help people stay in their homes by interceding with landlords to head off evictions. Hawaii has started a similar program.

In late October, the state opened a transitional shelter for 30 families, including 90 children, at a converted 1940s military building in Kalaeloa, the former Barbers Point Naval Air Station.

On Nov. 18, the state poured the foundation for an emergency transitional shelter in Waianae that will house up to 300 people when it opens early next year. The state is looking at building shelters at eight more sites along the Waianae Coast.

But Dino Palisbo, who has been living at Maili Beach Park with his girlfriend and their three dogs for about a year, said some people did not want to trade the freedom of the beach for the rules of a transitional shelter. “Half of them can pay rent, but it is so high it is going to take them out of the comfort zone,” Mr. Palisbo said. “When a studio costs \$700 or \$800, how can a family put four or five kids there?”

Others, like Ms. Greenwood, did not want to leave their communities for the state’s shelter at Kalaeloa, which is 10 miles from the beach park and several miles from the nearest bus route. She plans to move to the new shelter in Waianae, set to open next spring, because it is closer to her son’s school and her community activities.

Mr. Park said other homeless people on the beach looked up to Ms. Greenwood, who is a member of the state’s Oahu Island Burial Council, which works to protect ancient Hawaiian remains. A widow, she also has four adult children, but the only daughter who lives nearby has a studio apartment too small for Ms. Greenwood and the boy she adopted, Makalii Hatchie.

“She takes it upon herself to be somewhat of a leader,” Mr. Park said.

Ms. Greenwood said she hoped to begin collecting Social Security benefits and settle her workers’ compensation case soon so that she and her son could find a new home.

“Being homeless is not a crime, it is the fault of the government,” she said. “I can understand when it’s 20, 30 people, but when it

hits the thousands. ...”

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For Some Seniors, Raising Kids Can Help Raise Spirits

(ARA) - Are today's senior citizens healthier and wealthier than yesterday's? A recent study from the U.S. Census Bureau says yes. According to the report, "65+ in the United States: 2005," older Americans as a whole have never been in better shape economically or physically. But what about emotionally? Just because we age well, how well do we really feel deep down inside?

Beverly is a 76 year-old widow in Virginia who seems to have it all in place: a beautiful home, a secure income and a clean bill of health. Still, she says, without family nearby she's often lonely. "On the one hand, you're really proud that you've raised children who are happy and successful, but on the other, when you're home alone in your little blue chair, you really do miss the hustle and bustle of those early days."

For three elderly sisters in Michigan, the hustle and bustle of child rearing never ends -- and that's exactly the way the "Spicer" sisters like it. Julia Patterson, Florence Wallace and Geneva Coney, all in their late seventies, have been foster mothers to dozens of children over the past 18 years. Julia says having foster children keeps them young. "Only I never call them foster children," she says. "They're my children. The minute they step foot in this house, they're my sons and daughters. They're each other's brothers and sisters. If I'm taking a vacation, my children come, too. Always."

The Spicers are part of a special foster care program in Michigan managed for the state by Starr Commonwealth, a child and family services charity that has been in operation for nearly 100 years. Headquartered in Albion, Mich., Starr Commonwealth specializes in the treatment of troubled youth and operates a variety of programs to help struggling youngsters rebuild their damaged self-esteem through a "strength-based" treatment philosophy that looks for the good in every child. In addition to foster care programs in Michigan and Ohio, Starr also operates residential treatment centers, two private pay therapeutic boarding schools, plus community based programs that help young people learn to live responsibly on their own.

Julia and her sisters have seen the success of Starr's philosophy played out in the lives of countless children. Julia remembers James, her first foster child. "When James first came he would just eat and eat and eat and drink up all the juice, glass after glass," she says. Worried that something was physically wrong with the boy, Julia took him to the doctor. After an examination, the doctor told Julia to go ahead and let James have as much as he wanted, but just make sure he knew he had to drink a glass of water for every glass of juice he drank. It wasn't long before James learned to control his thirst. "He was really just hungry and thirsty for someone to love him and care for him," says the wise Julia.

"Mookie" is another success story. The recent college graduate was a troubled young boy when he came to live with Julia in the seventh grade. She was quick to recognize his potential as a student and an athlete, especially in football. Did Julia attend many games? "Every single one of them," she laughs.

When Julia had a stroke in 1996, it was Mookie who drove her to her doctor's appointments. "He'd even carry my pocketbook and wouldn't be ashamed like you'd think a young boy would be," she recalls.

The bonds that are created here will last a lifetime, the sisters say. "They never leave us," says Julia who adds that sitting home alone in a rocking chair is not her idea of living. "Too much going on to do that."

Starr Commonwealth is a child and family services organization with nearly a century of experience in treating troubled youth and their families. For more information about Starr Commonwealth, The Montcalm School or the No Disposable Kids (NDK) training program to help build healthy school environments, call (800) 837-5591 or visit their Web sites at www.starr.org or www.ndk.org.

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Published December 5, 2006
[From Lansing State Journal]

Tuesday's letters to the editor

Why say 'adopted'?

I have been fuming about this for a long time and thought this was a good time to vent. Why is it that every time the Ricky Holland case is talked about, they refer to Ricky as their "adopted" son?

Yes, I understand that he is not their biological child, but the moment those papers were signed in court, he became Lisa's and Tim's son. Period.

It bugs me to no end why that detail is even pertinent to the story or case for that matter. Perhaps now that the sentence has been handed down for Lisa, we can now realize the fact they killed their son!

Judy Willison
Charlotte



KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

Help YWCA help victims of abuse

Tuesday, December 5, 2006

For 30 years, the Kalamazoo YWCA has sheltered battered women and their families.

For the last 21 of those years, victims of domestic violence and their children have been harbored, counseled, fed, mentored and supported in the YWCA's downtown building.

But while the program and mission have grown, the YWCA's aging space has not. Its dated rooms and hallways can be dingy and oppressive -- not the kind of space conducive to the kind of healing abused people need, not the kind of place children would see as a home away from home.

The YWCA has aided more than 1,000 domestic abuse victims and their children each year, providing 12,000 nights of shelter at the downtown building and another 15,000 nights of transitional housing annually. About 40 people are housed at the shelter on any given night.

But the YWCA has an ambitious \$5 million remodeling project in the works. All it needs is financial support from the community.

The project would increase the number of crisis-shelter beds to 46, increasing by 2,000 the number of shelter nights available annually. It would make it possible to provide more child care. Aging mechanicals in the building would be repaired or replaced.

The public portion of the fundraising campaign, co-chaired by Ann Parfet and daughter Rachel Parfet Worgess, was launched today. The fundraising schedule is as ambitious as plans to start renovation and remodeling next year.

We're confident this community can do it.

Some communities, blitzed by repeated campaigns to raise private funds for crucial area services, sometimes develop compassion fatigue and start to tune out when fundraisers ask people to pull out their checkbooks.

But the Kalamazoo community always has been willing to step up when challenged to meet a need. Whether pledging funds for United Way, local food pantries, homeless shelters, mentoring programs or medical care, the residents of this community have been unstinting in their generosity.

We are confident that this community will step up again, this time on behalf of those who have endured domestic violence and are trying to get their lives back on track.

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Article published Dec 5, 2006

Search widens for homicide suspect

Trace Christenson

The Enquirer

Battle Creek police are mounting a national search for the suspect in Saturday's homicide.

"We have had officers looking for him," Cmdr. James Saylor of the Battle Creek Police Department said Monday. "But we believe he may have left the state."

A warrant for open murder was issued Sunday for Arenza D. Hubbard, 34, of Battle Creek in Saturday's death of his girlfriend, Ebony Lee, 24.

Battle Creek police said Hubbard is alleged to have hit Lee with a car while she was walking near Roseneath Avenue and Hubbard Street about 2:04 a.m. after the couple had an argument.

The victim's mother, Monica Lee, said Monday that Hubbard said he cared for her daughter and that they seemed happy.

"He used to say, 'I love your daughter,'" Monica Lee said. "No, you don't. You don't love her."

Monica Lee said not only did Hubbard run over her daughter, but he then walked away from the crash site and left her lying in the roadway.

"He said he loved her. No, he didn't."

The couple dated for three years and had lived together on Boyes Drive since Hubbard was released from prison in June.

Monica Lee said she and several members of the family were at her daughter's home on Nov. 17, and Ebony and Hubbard were happy.

"They had little spats, but everything seemed pretty good."

Born in Battle Creek and a former student at Battle Creek Central High School, Ebony Lee completed her high school education at Climax-Scotts High School and was awarded a diploma in 2004.

She was working at an adult foster-care home operated by Progressive Residential Services at 535 E. Emmett St.

"She loved taking care of people," Monica Lee said.

Ebony Lee worked from 2 to 10 p.m. Friday and called her mother after work.

"That was the last time I heard from her," Monica Lee said.

Battle Creek police said Hubbard and Ebony Lee were at an apartment at 248 Jordan St. early on Saturday where they had an argument.

Monica Lee said she has not learned what the argument was about, but said her daughter apparently snuck out of the apartment and was less than a block from her mother's home on Roseneath Avenue when she was struck by a vehicle.

The SUV went off the road and hit Lee while she was on the sidewalk, and then the vehicle slid out of control and turned onto its top.

Lee was taken to Battle Creek Health System where she was pronounced dead.

Police searched for Hubbard, but when they went to the couple's home it appeared his personal items were gone. Police said the rental property was ransacked, and several shots later were fired into the house.

Saylor said officers are seeking a federal warrant for Hubbard for unlawful flight to avoid prosecution and are asking for help from the FBI, the Michigan State Police Fugitive Team and "America's Most Wanted" television program to find Hubbard.

"It makes it a huge priority," Saylor said. Hubbard has family and friends in California, and Saylor said he may go there.

Anyone with information about Hubbard's location is asked to call Silent Observer at 963-3888.

In the meantime, Ebony Lee's family is planning a funeral for noon Friday.

"She was a beautiful person," Monica Lee said. "She loved to bowl and to cook, and she loved her family. She was generous and kind-hearted.

"She was happy all the time," her mother said. "And we miss her very much."

Trace Christenson covers crime and courts. He can be reached at 966-0685 or tchrist@battlecr.gannett.com.



Federal money targets marriage

Tuesday, December 5, 2006

By Susan J. Demas

sdemas@citpat.com -- 768-4927

When Washington calls with a \$1.1 million offer, you take it.

The Michigan Healthy Marriage Coalition for Jackson, Lenawee and Wayne counties was left off the grant-making gravy train this fall, but organizers found out they made the last-minute cut in November.

Programs boosting marriages in Jackson County will get a \$250,000 chunk of a renewable five-year U.S. Department of Health and Human Services grant starting in January.

"This is about quality of life," said Scott Schmidt, a coordinator with United Way of Jackson County, which applied for the grant.

"This will have a big impact on the next generation of children."

Schmidt credits Democratic U.S. Sen. Carl Levin, who wrote a letter supporting the program in August.

"Strong marriages are critical for our communities and especially our children," Levin said in a statement Monday, "and I'm pleased that this innovative program has been awarded funding."

The marriage coalition consists of 125 groups, including United Way of Jackson County, which started its Healthy Marriage Initiative this spring.

Funds will go to new programs dealing with step-families, high school relationships, divorce reduction and premarital education.

High-risk groups will be targeted, including recently released prisoners.

More intact families will mean more stable lives for couples and children, Schmidt said.

"There is a tremendous cost of divorce," said Schmidt, who heads up Full Circle, which oversees the marriage initiative. "Businesses suffer with absenteeism. Kids are more likely to enter the juvenile justice system."

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Article published Dec 5, 2006
Charities coordinate gifts
Most groups say abuses happen but are rare

By NICOLE GERRING
Times Herald

With the plethora of toys, food and clothing drives and giving trees, it seems everyone's needs could be met when the winter holidays approach.

Large-scale holiday drives run in tandem with efforts led by individuals, churches and small businesses. But, while some families receive a pile of toys, food baskets and winter coats for their children, others go without, despite having signed up at several agencies.

Representatives from local agencies agree exploitation of the system is rare. Perhaps a few out of a thousand families will try to take advantage of assistance, they said.

It's a lack of coordination, some said, that in past years has left families without gifts while others received help from many different groups.

Barb Larue, community resource coordinator for the St. Clair County Department of Human Services, said it's each agency's responsibility to make sure services don't overlap.

This year, the department started a database that keeps track of how much each family is getting and distributes names of needy families to smaller organizations and individual efforts.

"It's up to us to make sure we spread our resources as much as possible," Larue said.

Making a list

The department of human services, which has a Community Giving program each winter, has created a database that lists families who have signed up for help at several area nonprofit organizations.

Kids in Distress Services in St. Clair, which helps families with children during the holiday season, is among the 10 groups participating in the database.

Kids in Distress founder Jane Robinson of St. Clair said she has been disappointed in past years to find a few families who have exploited charitable efforts.

Previously, each organization kept its own list. Each group had separate criteria for who was chosen to receive help.

"Last year, I personally witnessed a couple of families who had registered on five or six lists. They came here and their van was already full with toys," she said.

The Salvation Army Port Huron Citadel Corps maintains its own client database, Maj. Tim Meyer said. Organizations can ask the Salvation Army for the names of people who have used their services.

However, the organization doesn't deny services to those who benefit from other programs.

"There are some folks who do go to several places, but a percentage of them are needy enough to do that. It's a small percentage of people who abuse the system," Meyer said. "There are some, and when you hear about them, it's a huge frustration, but it's pretty rare."

Collection efforts, such as the Toys for Kids drive organized by local bar owner Arthur Payne, have been included in the department of human services' database. Another individually-spearheaded effort - Kenzie's Boots & Coats for Kids, which is led by McKenzie Hubbard, 7, of Jeddo - will give all collected items to the Salvation Army.

Working together

Although organizations have historically competed for the same dollars, there is a move toward cooperation, said Barbara Corcoran of Douglas, a consultant and grant writer for nonprofit organizations.

Nationally, nonprofit groups have become more financially accountable, better organized and cost effective, she said.

"The collaboration is phenomenal, and most funders request that," Corcoran said. "The whole structure of the nonprofit world has gotten so much better.

"Although they may do the same thing, they're not competitive in that there are so many people to serve. There's a greater need than there is competitiveness."

Locally, leaders said they too have joined efforts to meet a common goal.

"I'm seeing more cooperation, and that's what there has to be," said Robinson, from Kids in Distress Services. "The tighter the money is, the tighter we have to get to take care of our own."

Saginaw News

December 5, 2006

Wish List seeks donors

Saginaw County's annual Holiday Wish List still has 275 families hoping for a brighter Christmas.

If you'd like to answer a wish, call the Wish List phone bank at 755-8855 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. through Friday and choose a family to help, or consider sending a check and organizers will answer a family's wishes in your name.

The Department of Human Services of Saginaw County and United Way of Saginaw County sponsor the Wish List.